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A SET DESIGN FOR THE PLAY
JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK
BY SEAN O'CASEY

A Thesis
Presented To
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Michael S. Hanford
August 1966

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Charles E. Lauterbach, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Daryl Basler

Dohn Miller

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Scene design, like other kinds of creative design is the creating of a form to fulfill a purpose or function. The function of scene design is obviously linked with the dramatic form which it serves. Scene design in providing a visual support to the dramatic form, is an integral part of the modern theatre. Its function as a result is woven into the philosophy of modern theatre practice. The basic concept of present-day theatre, as a playwriting and play-production unity, has brought scenery out of the pretty background class into full partnership in the production of the play. (23:6)

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. The purpose of this study is to design a setting for the play Juno And The Paycock, by Sean O'Casey. It will be done in such a manner as to be (1.) aesthetically satisfactory, (2.) appropriate to the play, its historical period, and social conditions of the characters, (3.) aligned with the demands of stage presentation, in that it provides the necessary space for stage movements, and traffic, (4.) practical for construction within the limits imposed by the stage of McConnell Auditorium.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERM USED

Design; Aside from the usual meaning of harmony

line, color, space, shape, and direction, for the purpose of this study, design will be considered as the application of sketches, scale, and working drawings, by the author in his attempts to clarify and identify the visual elements of the play.

Setting; Setting refers to the physical elements of the design, the architectural pieces and those major properties which are required to reflect the historical and social conditions of the play.

Aesthetically satisfactory; The study will not try to define aesthetics further than the feeling of completeness and appropriateness in regard to the setting.

Appropriate to historical period and social conditions; The period and conditions here will be governed by the elements surrounding the play. For example, the historical period of the play is Ireland, about 1920. The social position of the characters in the play are those of the lower middle class.

Stage presentation or movement; This study will not attempt to reflect a directorial point of view, but will merely take into consideration the fact there must be stage movement, traffic blocking, and business within the confines of the setting. The setting will lend itself in the establishment and maintenance of a relationship of characters.

Practical; For the purpose of this study, practical

will mean the practicality of the setting within McConnell Auditorium, as well as the use of material and equipment available for construction.

III. JUSTIFICATION

It is only within the past one hundred years that the art of stage design has come into its own. Before that time scenery was decoration for the sake of spectacle. An example of this style is personified by the stage design of the Italian Renaissance. Here plays were performed before a background that depicted a street scene, or great hall. Each added little if anything pertinent to the play. These scenes were as lavish as expense would allow and were limited in scope, only by the creativity of the artist employed to work on them. (21:79-100) With the advent of the traveling company came a lessening of the spectacle for its own sake. The need for scenery that could be easily moved created the use of standardized setting. These were still far from satisfactory. They were designed for their ease of travel and expense, and had little to do with the play presented in front of them.

The decline of the reign of scenery for the sake of spectacle began with men like Adolph Appia and Gordon Craig. It was Craig, the father of modern scene design, who wrote at the turn of the 1900's, "The theatre should not be a place to exhibit scenery.. it should be a place in which the entire

beauty of life can be unfolded... the inner beauty and meaning of life." (21:437)

A transition of styles forced theatre to examine its forms. A new concern for a world of reality found its way into the theatre. The advent of Realism ushered in a new drama. Its major premise was, "the playwrights should strive for a truthful depiction of the real world." (7:262) With this new drama of reality, emphasis of reality of settings appeared. "Detailed descriptions of the setting appeared in the stage directions. Furthermore, unlike most of the earlier plays, the details of the setting are important to the play action." (7:270)

An example of this new treatment appears in Isben The Wild Duck, "The characters are heavily influenced by the physical conditions which surround them, and this can be made clear to an audience only through an adequate and accurate representation of environment. The characters seem to live in the setting, for they do everything there that they do in a real room. In the studio they eat, retouch photographs, entertain friends, and carry on their daily existence in countless ways. The settings are never merely a garnishing added to the play but are vital to the action." (7:270)

If movement away from scenery for the sake of spectacle can be illustrated, the Irish Theatre Movement and the Abbey

Theatre must be counted as a significant example.

Probably no country has ever been blessed with authors possessing the insight of Ireland's Yeats, Synge, and O'Casey. It was the self-educated O'Casey who saw the tragic realities of the poor and their struggles. It was his idea not to gloss over their homes and lives with a sugar coating of romantic theatricality, but rather to depict their homes and problems as they were; simple, stark, and real. (21:421-22)

The works of Sean O'Casey have been called a vital force in the movement of the Irish Drama. R.M. Fox has called him "...the sun of Irish Drama...a sensitive artist steeped in the atmosphere of authenticity...breathing in his play not realism, but actions of truth." (12:162)

There is little doubt that O'Casey is an excellent playwright, nor is there any question that O'Casey has produced a moving drama in Juno And The Paycock. The characters drawn by O'Casey are not the usual thin facade of theatricality, but rather they are the flesh and blood of the tormented Irish soul. Rosamound Gilder calls Juno And The Paycock, "The most beautiful, and articulate...of O'Casey's works. The finest play of our time." (14:108) John Gassner included the work in his Treasury Of The Theatre as a representation of the finest of Irish literature. (13:343)

First produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin in 1924, two

short years after the civil rebellion, the play awakened painful memories of divisive partisanships. Yeats found himself again proclaiming the arrival of an Irish Genius. (5:434) Sean O'Casey's curious mixture of the tragic and comic elements of Irish life places his works well above the average.

Juno And The Paycock is surely a work worthy of study. It provides a wide variety of problems which must be met and solved if the setting is to convey the complex atmosphere of the play.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCEDURE OF THE DESIGN

When the professional scene designer begins a design, he follows a definite procedure. He has the author of the play to interpret the script for him, an excellent creative sense, and unlimited resources from which to draw.

"The first of many steps is the reading and evaluating the script in order to determine the needs of the play. The drawing of rough sketches follows in order to visualize these qualities. The development of a floor plan which traces playing space evolves into a perspective drawing that enables the designer to project the idea of the completed setting. (23:64)

"These processes may be repeated many times until the director and the designer are satisfied with the design. When a final perspective drawing has been reached this plate is developed into a working drawing, with detailed drawings for complex elements of the setting. Then these scaled drawings are given to those who are to do the actual construction." (7:425-430)

The author's method of attacking the problem does not differ greatly from those of accepted practice of scene designer. "The first step is consideration of the elements dictated by the script. These include levels, entrances, traffic of the actors, major properties, and major represen-

tative symbols of the script." (7:427)

The greatest resource from which an amateur designer can draw is an accumulation of the historical and social background materials of the play. When he does not have the author of the play to interpret his idea of the setting, the designer must turn to these sources for a greater understanding of the work. In this thesis, library materials were consulted to complete the designer's understanding of the play's background.

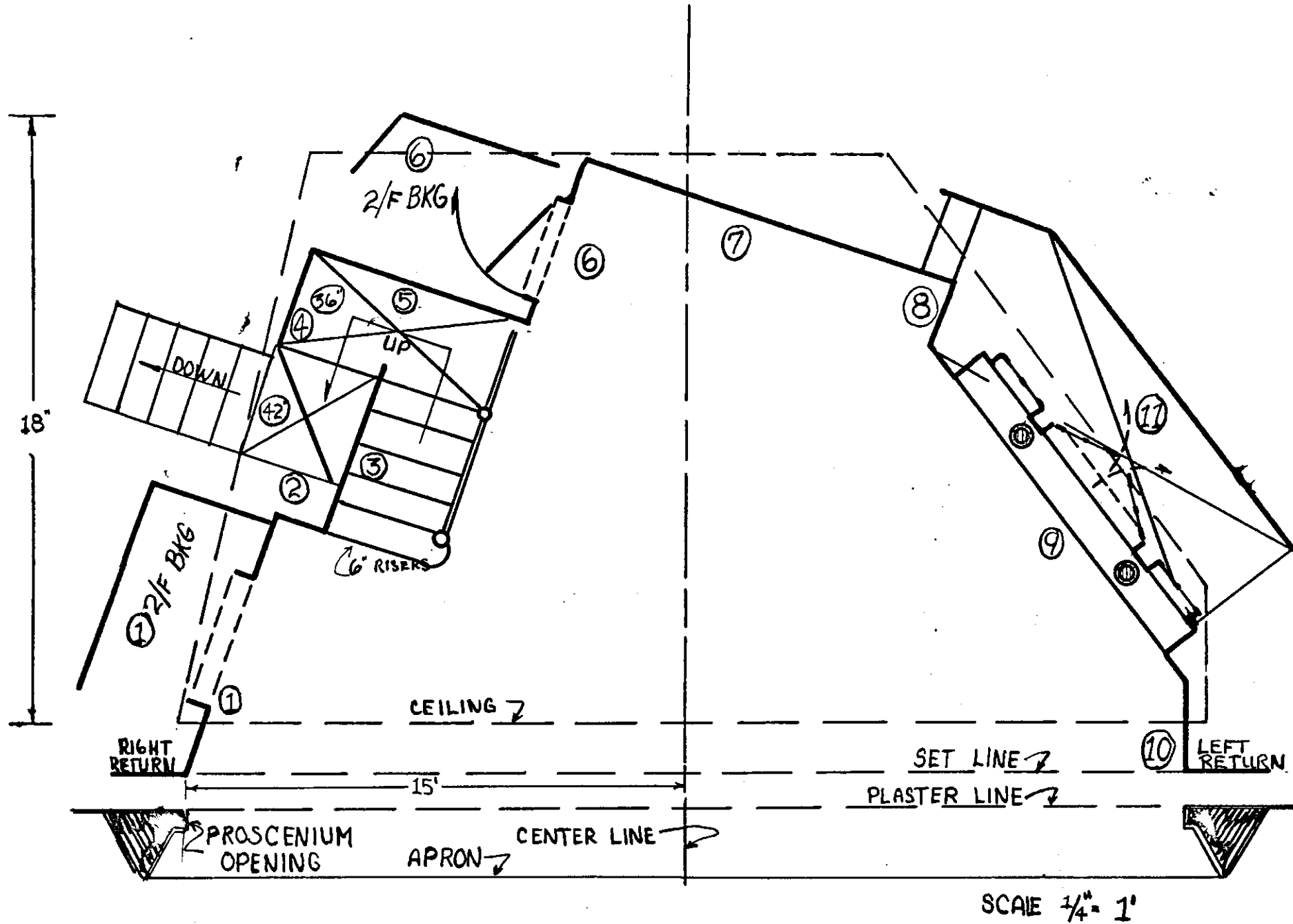
Armed with the script requirements and the social, historical background of the play, the rough sketches were drawn seeking to visualize the qualities called for by the script. These were not drawn as a complete design, but were rather stepping stones, or perhaps a foundation on which the design was to be constructed.

Now equipped with a visual idea of the projected setting, the designer must consider the stage house on which the set is to be constructed. Because of the limits imposed by the stage house of McConnell Auditorium, the facilities, and the stage relationship to the auditorium, the designer carefully examined his projected idea within the limits of practicality.

Assembling the design best suited for the play and the limitations of McConnell Auditorium was the next step. Now some definite idea was established. In order to give a great-

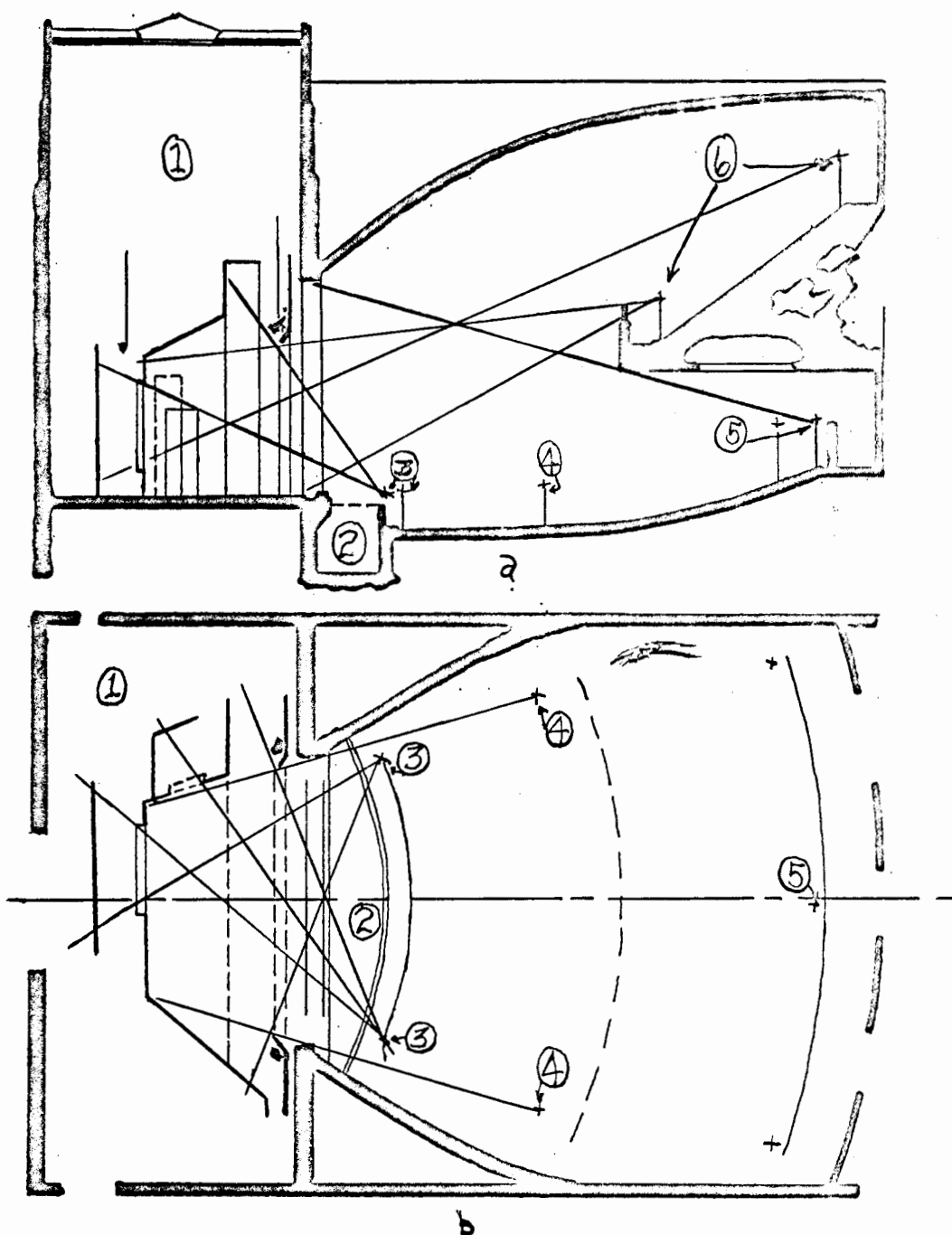
er understanding of how the design complied with the traffic of the actors, a ground plan was drawn. A ground plan is a scaled schematic drawing much like the floor plan of a house

ILLUSTRATION 1A



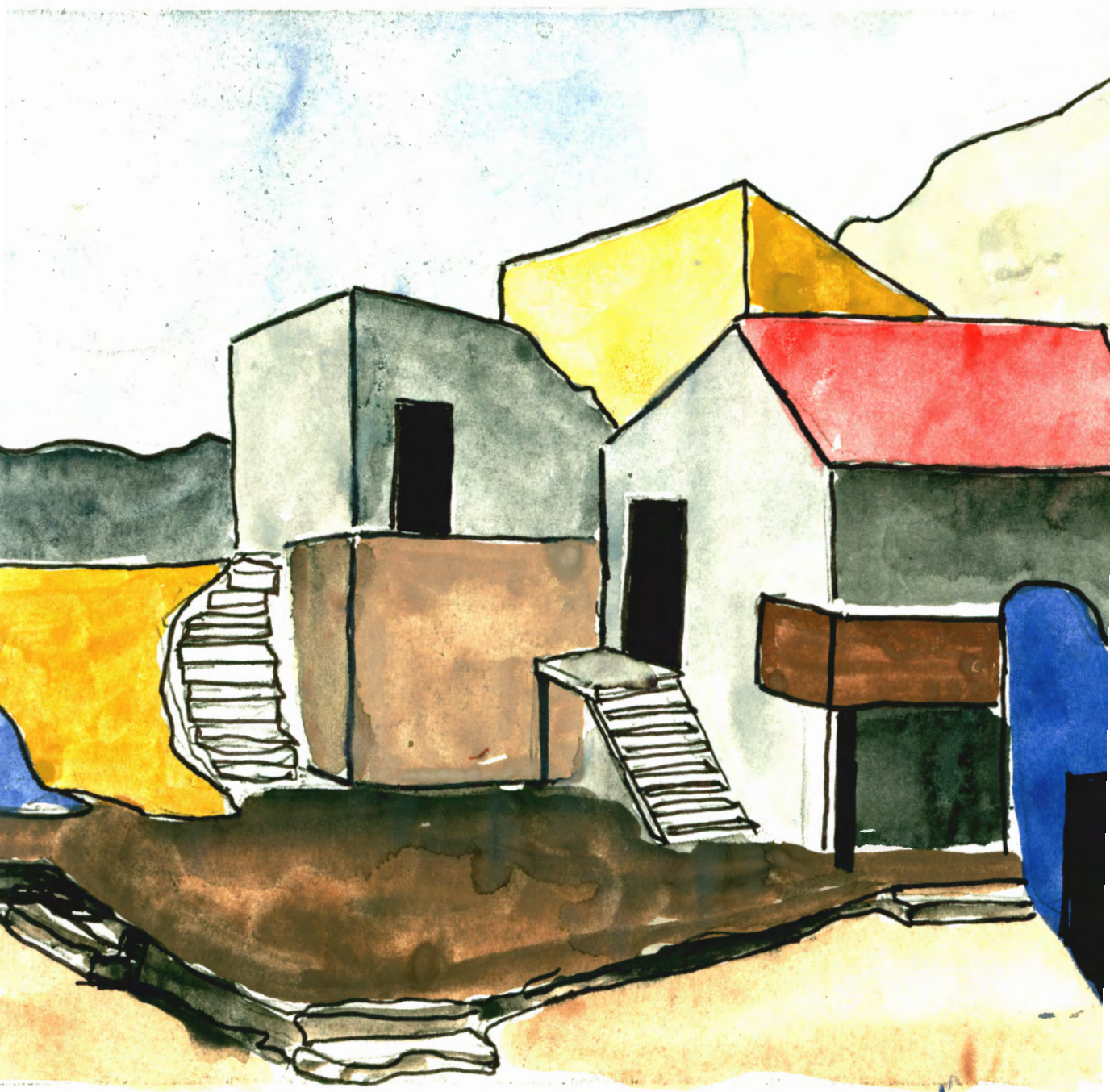
The ground plan is of great value because not only does it give a visual idea of the sets compliance with traffic, but it determines exactly where the sight lines of the auditorium fall with the setting. (23:19)

ILLUSTRATION 2A



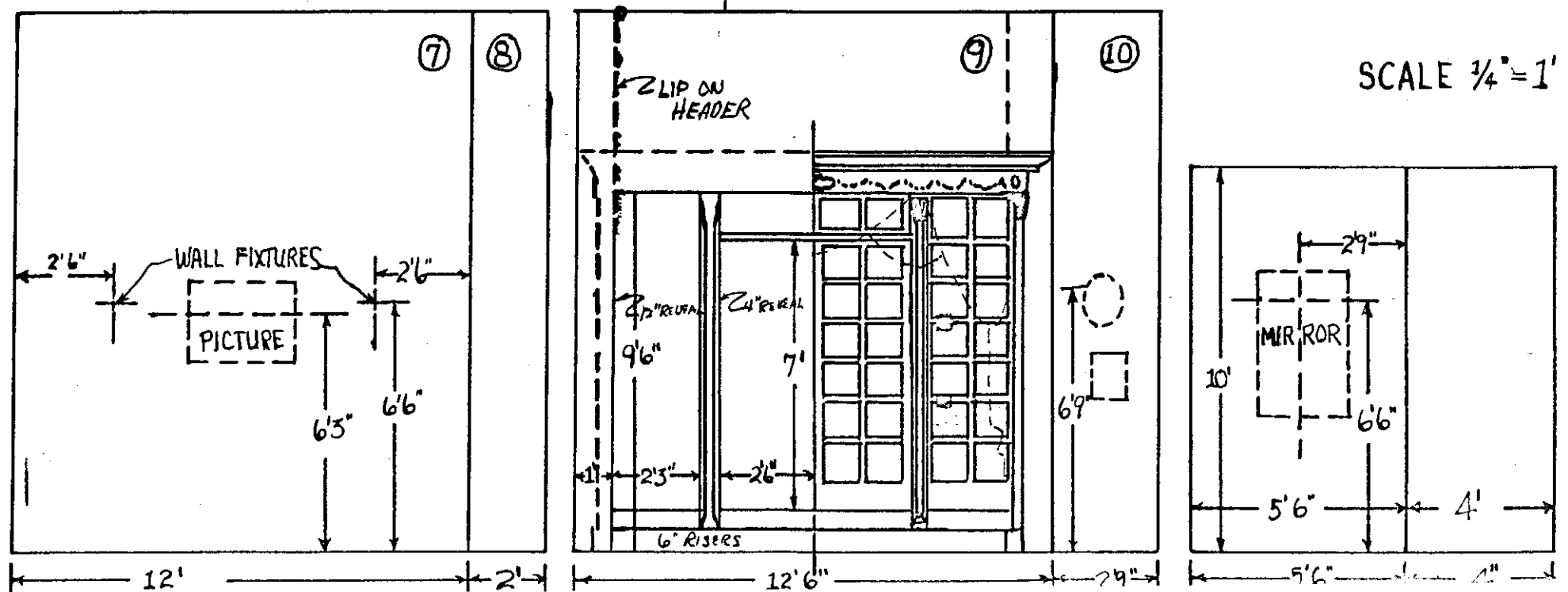
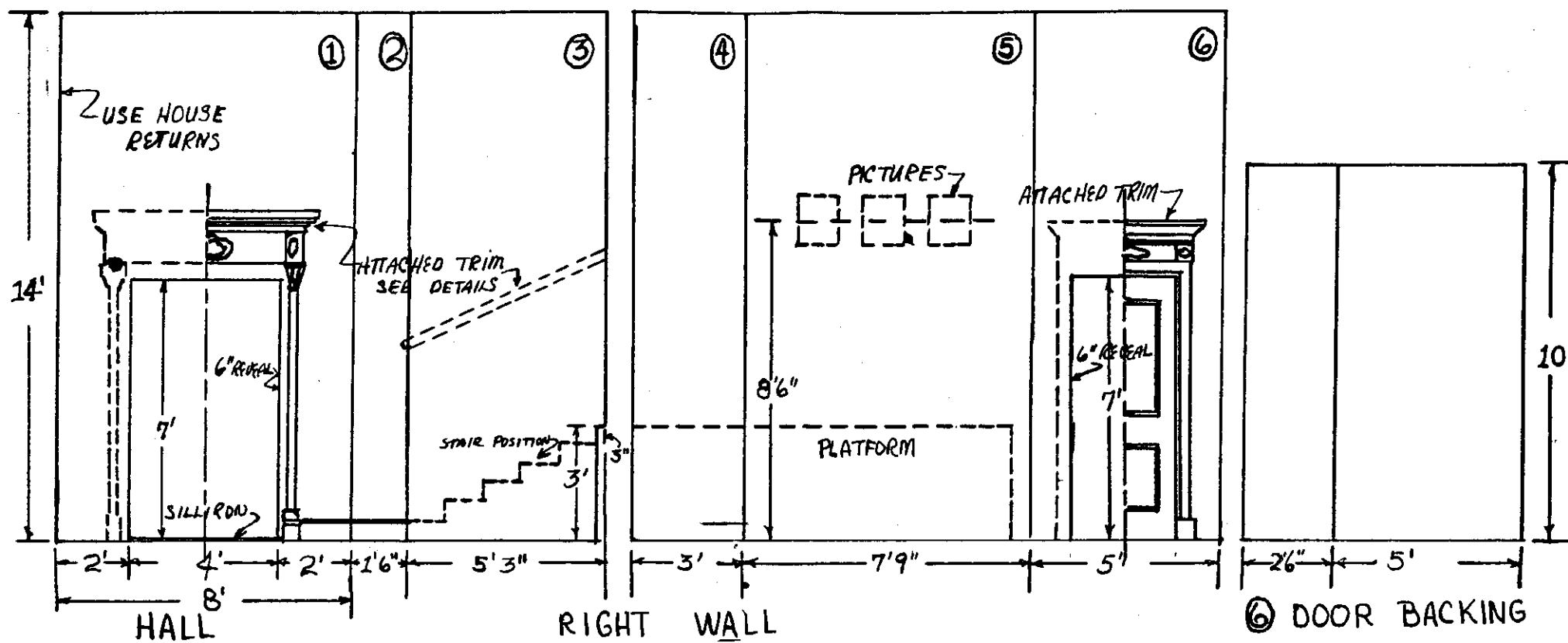
From this ground plan a complete perspective drawing, with full color scheme was rendered. Here for the first time the designer has an indication of how the completed setting will appear on the stage. (23:65)

ILLUSTRATION 3A



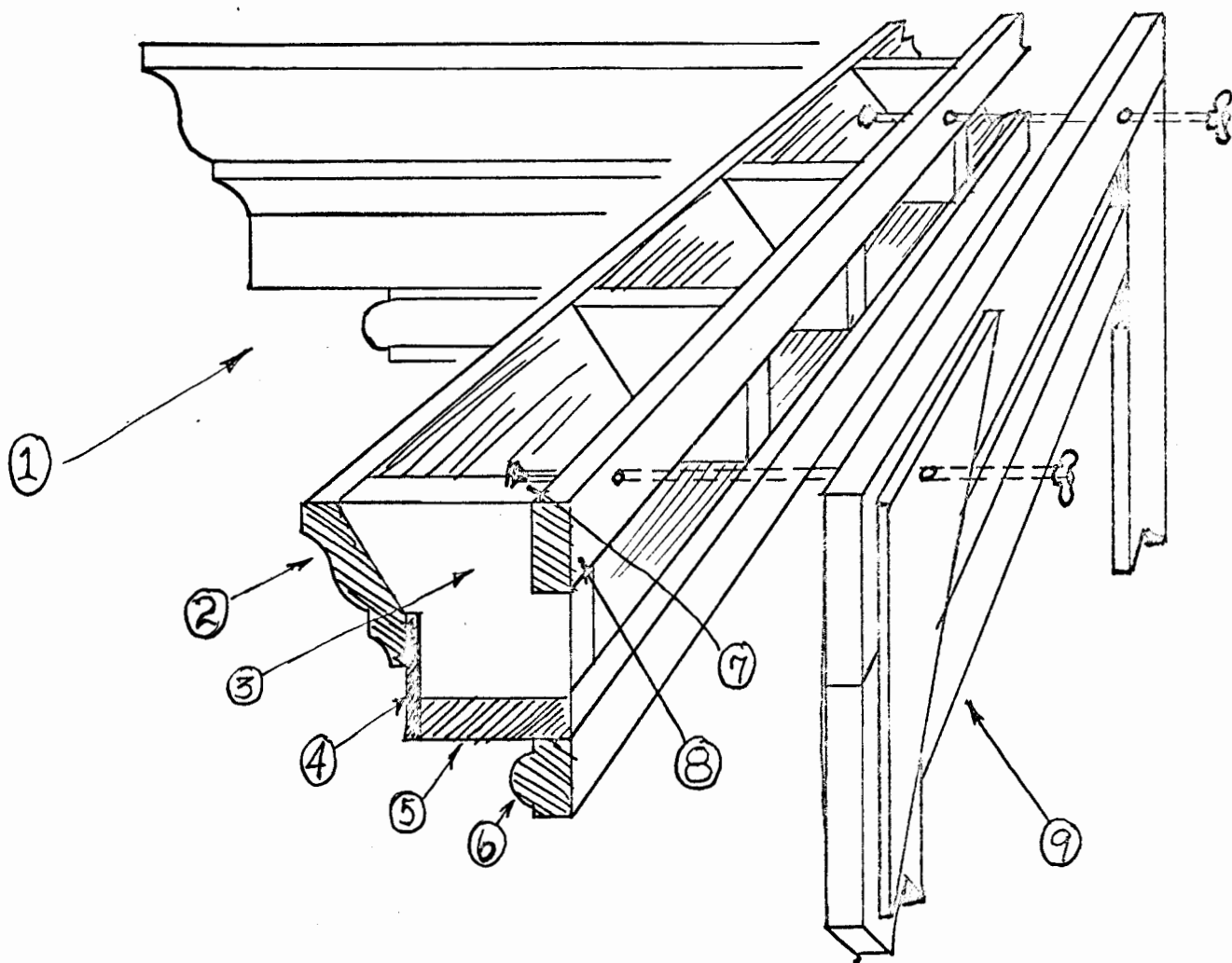
In order that the height of the setting and the properties within the setting conform to scale of the perspective drawing, plans called elevations were drawn. Those drawn of the front of the set are called painters elevations. The rear elevations, or working drawings are used in general construction of the setting. (23:80-81)

ILLUSTRATION 4A



Those elements of the setting involving more complicated construction are illustrated by detailed drawings. (23:85)

ILLUSTRATION 5A



These scaled drawings coupled with the ground plan become working plans. These are the blueprints from which those working on construction might erect the setting.

CHAPTER III

REQUIREMENTS OF THE DESIGN:

THE SCRIPT, THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC BACKGROUND,
AND THE LIMITATIONS OF McCONNELL AUDITORIUM.

THE SCRIPT

The starting point of the design for Juno And The Paycock is the script material. "Like other theatre workers, the designer must begin by understanding the script. He should make a through analysis of the play. Unlike the director of a play the designer is looking for practical requirements. The number of settings required, the kind of setting needed for the action, the physical arrangement of doors and windows, furniture, platform, and steps, and last of all for an indication of type and style." (7:426-27) Once these factors have been sorted and placed in their proper perspective, then it is time to proceed.

The stage directions of Juno And The Paycock by O'Casey, in Modern British Drama by Warnock (26:357-424) are to be the source for this analysis. It is possible that the stage directions may be the product of editorial footnoting or an example of a production other than Abbey Theatre. To prevent errors other editions of the play were investigated. These include Block and Shedd's Masters Of The Modern Drama, (5:435-459) and Durham and Dodd British And American Plays (11:424-

459) and the acting addition furnished by Samuel French & Company. (22: the text)

The Directions found in Warnock are;

The living room of a two-room tenancy occupied by the Boyle family in a tenement house in Dublin. Left of door a window looking into the street; at back a dresser; farther to the right at back, a window looking into the back of the house. Between the window and the dresser is a picture of the Virgin; below the picture, on a bracket, is a crimson bowl in which a floating votive light is burning. Farther to the right is a small bed partly concealed by cretonne hangings strung on a twine. To the right is a fireplace; near the fireplace is a door leading to the other room. Beside the fireplace is a box containing coal. On the mantelshelf is an alarm clock lying on its face. In a corner near the window looking into the back is a galvanized bath. A table and some chairs. On the table are breakfast things for one. A teapot is on the hob, (hob; a metal stand level with the grate in a fireplace, used to keep kettles, etc., warm.) and a frying pan stands inside the fender. There are a few books on the dresser and one on the table. Leaning against the dresser is a long-handled shovel--the kind invariably used by laborers when turning concrete or mixing mortar. (26:357-58)

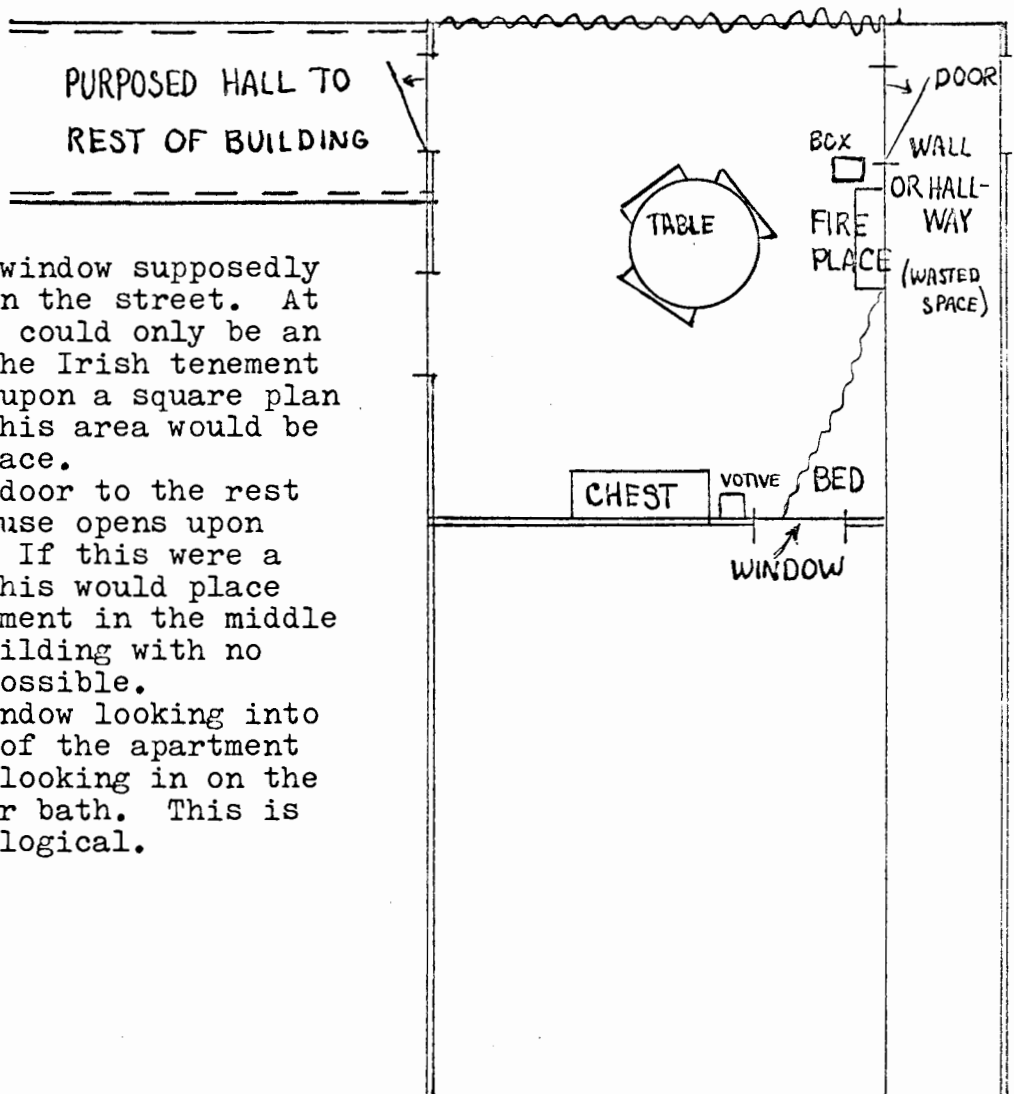
To help in the construction of the design a list of these elements and its descriptive information is formed. It is with the aid of this list that physical arrangement of the elements begins.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. A door. | 6. A small bed. |
| 2. A window. | 7. Fireplace |
| 3. A dresser. | 8. Another door. |
| 4. Picture of the Virgin. | 9. Box of coal |
| 5. A crimson bowl. | 10. Mantelshelf. |

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 11. Alarm Clock. | 14. Hob. |
| 12. Galvanized bath. | 15. Fender. |
| 13. Table and chairs. | 16. Long-handled shovel. |

Each designer must decide if it is practical to present all of the elements listed. In illustration 1B each element is placed as the stage directions call for. This plan is architecturally impractical if not impossible.

ILLUSTRATION 1B



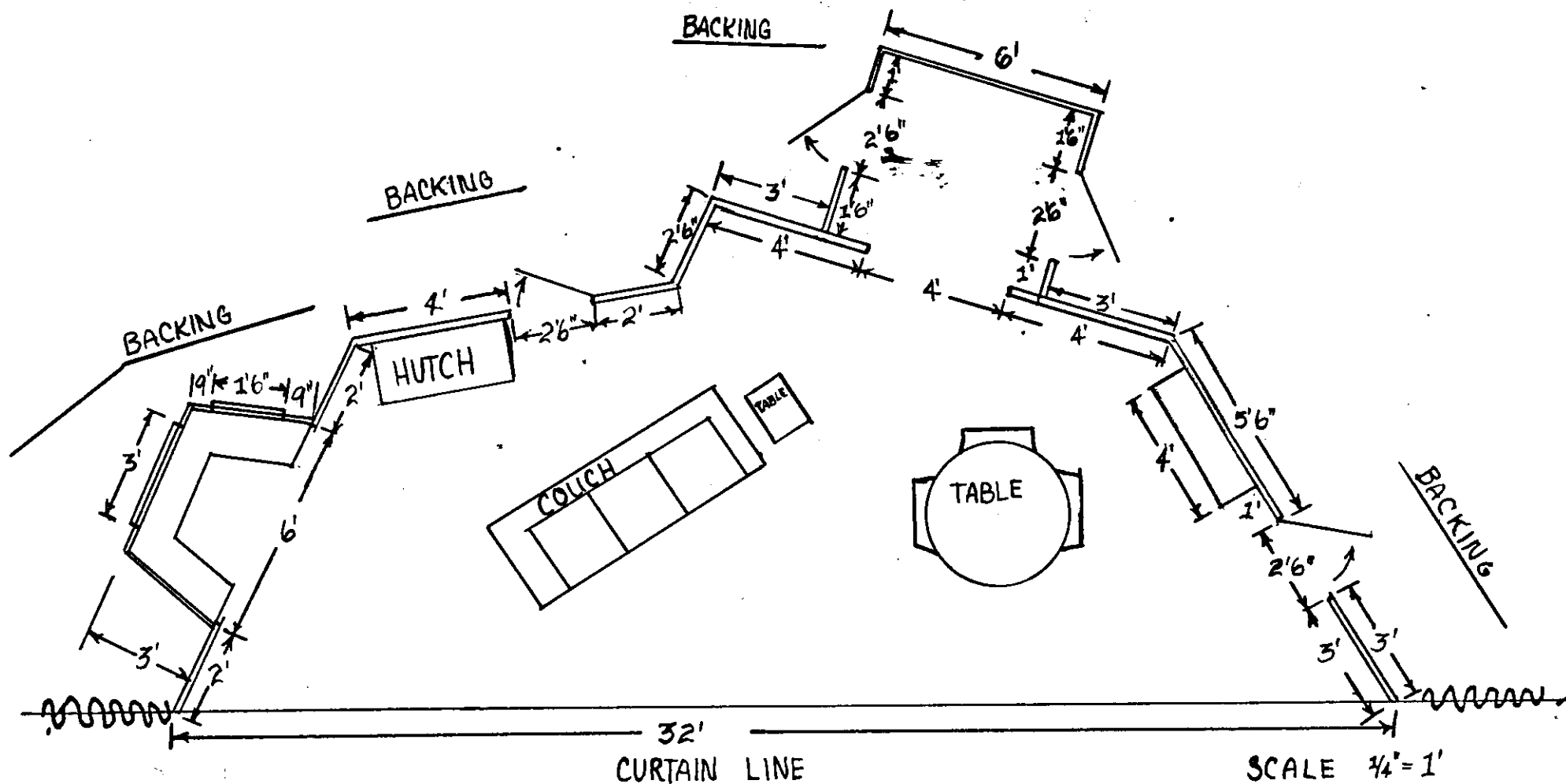
The window supposedly looks upon the street. At best this could only be an alley. The Irish tenement is built upon a square plan and all this area would be wasted space.

The door to the rest of the house opens upon nothing. If this were a hallway this would place the apartment in the middle of the building with no windows possible.

A window looking into the back of the apartment would be looking in on the bedroom or bath. This is not very logical.

plan several careful readings of the script persuaded the author to alter and remove some of the elements listed. Among those removed were the window to the back of the house, for the simple reason it was never used. Most of the items were relocated to provide greater interest and practicality.

ILLUSTRATION 2B

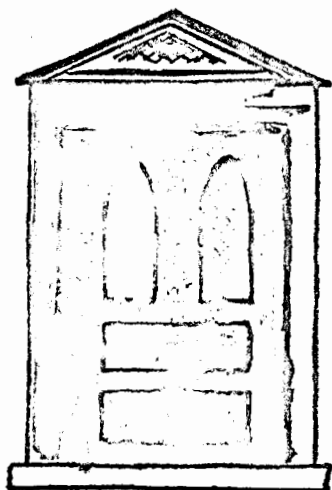


Since little descriptive information is provided the physical description of each part had to be investigated to provide aesthetic as well as historical accuracy. However, the writer has claimed artistic license in order to establish better traffic, aesthetic area interest, and to create a homebase for each principal. (Homebase is a place within the room to which the character always returns. In this case an example might be a chair in front of the fireplace for Capt. Jack.)

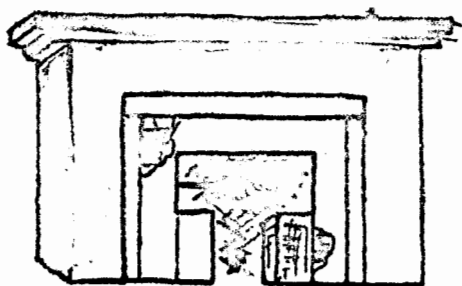
All the elements were listed and their major characteristics noted. These simple illustrations are the results of this study.

ILLUSTRATION 3B

DOOR--Short, tendency toward
wideness, thick ornamental
casing; dark wood. (20:92)

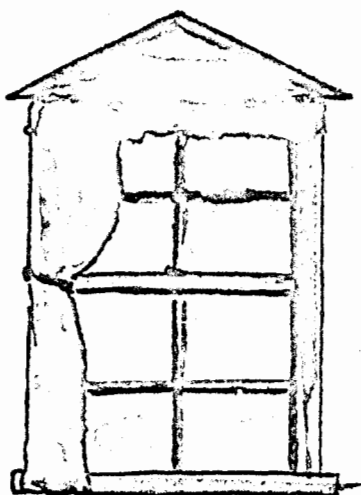


4B



FIREPLACE-- About 60 inches high, cement over brick, ornate mantle, long, a means of cooking as well as a central heat source. Burns coal. Not very effective. (11:452) (9:25)

5B



WINDOW-- Long narrow, approximate size ID-28"-30" x 68"-72" OD-36"-40" x 72"-78". May have been a severe rectangle or possibly a cornice piece or arch added. Curtains are chintz or cotton lace. Possibly a valance box or more likely a curtain valance. The window, if functional, would be a counter weight vertical slide. Its height is due to the gothic influence which was widely used in Irish Architecture at the turn of the century. (20:24) (9:25)

6B

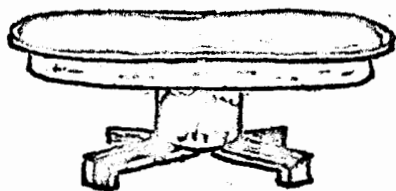
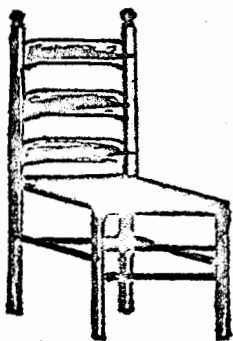


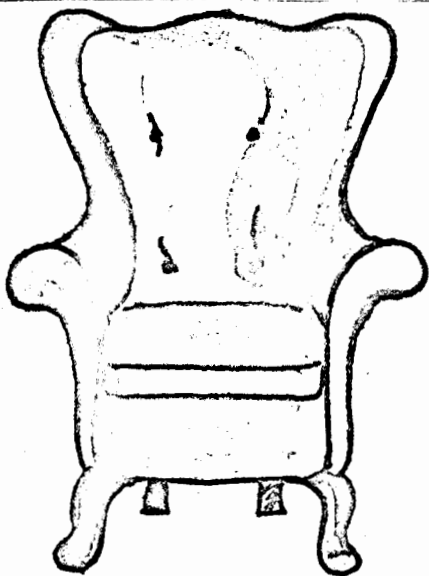
TABLE-- Round heavy ornate. Center pedestal, carved claw feet. A member of the Irish Chippendale. (2:988) (9:84)

7B



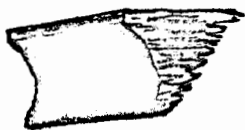
CHAIRS-- Straight back, unpadded. Round dowel construction. (11:452)

8B



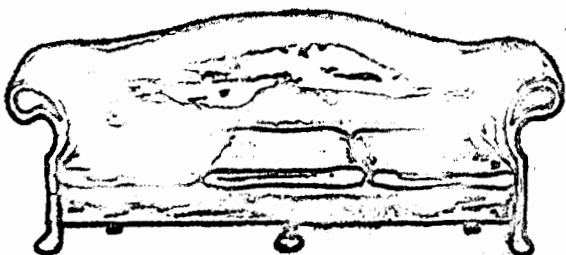
SIDE CHAIR-- The side chair is also a piece of Chippendale. Its predominate characteristic is the winged arms. (2:551-52)

9B



MOULDING-- The gothic mouldings were deep hollows, generally roll mouldings with fillets. The ornaments were less often continuous rather than spasmodic, or at the terminals of the shape. (2:136-37)

10B



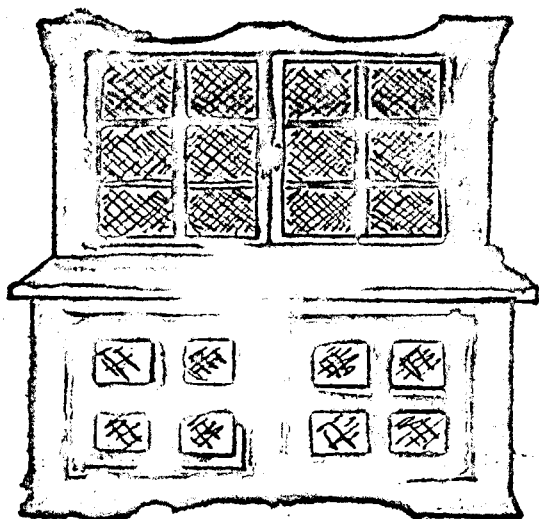
DAVENPORT-- An example of Irish Chippendale. The main characteristics are the carved back and winged arm rest. Its covering is a tight pattern of vines and flowers. (2:857)

11B



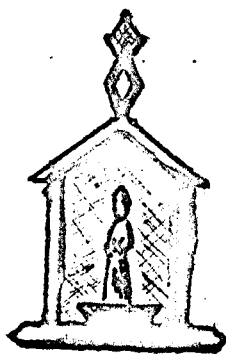
BATH-- The galvanized tub found throughout the continent at the turn of the century. About 3 feet in diameter. It doubled as the family bath and washtub. (9:86)

12B



DRESSER-- The term dresser is misleading. Sideboard, a cupboard in which dishes and eating utensils were kept would be more appropriate. Consisted of drawers and doors ornately carved. Dark heavy wood. (2:887-903)

13B



MADONNA AND VOTIVE-- A small shrine to the Virgin. Carved from wood. Outline is that of Gothic Capitol, on which was a Celtic Cross. The bowl a transparent crimson in which the votive candle burned. (Father Maurice G. Mulcahy, St. Andrews Catholic Church.)

There is one aspect of this house that is apparant, without being in the script. This is the presence of Juno. A woman does not need money to decorate a home. Juno's very much in evidence. The cheap curtains are pressed, the battered furniture shines from the constant dusting. The very room radiates the dominate character of this woman. This fact is made more evident in Act III. Captain Jack is responsible for the new furniture and nick-nacks which tastelessly replace the warm atmosphere of the room before.

The elements of the design if they are to fulfill their task must have a personality of their own. Realizing this difficulty of projecting a wall which contains any emotion, it is important for the elements of the design to have visual ability to portray those qualities which each must establish. This is the final standard to which each element of the design is to be measured. Does it reflect what the play demands of it?

THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

There is a need for common background if the full implications of the play are to be found in the setting. The importance of the Gaelic Traditions are the spine of character portrayal. The realistic theatre movement is concerned with the total. Understanding of the lives and backgrounds of the characters is necessary to discover the significant traits which would be carried in the atmosphere surrounding the play.

The first step in this examination was a brief over-view of the history of the Irish. Ireland was first inhabited by the Spanish and Greeks. They had but a short time before being over-run by the Gaels.

"Tall in stature with fresh complexions, reddish brown hair, and warlike characters; they lost no time in imposing their military aristocracy, their language and their culture on the aboriginal population." (8:21)

However, for all their antagonism the Gaels were permissive, allowing time to remove barriers and mold a polygon society. Dividing in "taulhas" or tribes each had at its head a chief and a "filidh". The "filidh" were a kind of magic post, much like the Indians "medicine man". Their power of anatomy brought them respect and powerful influence. (8:22)

In this Gaelic society women held an unusual and superior

position. One even seems to discover traces of matriarchy, as for example, in the fact that certain names mean "son of the mother" and not the father... Their love of magnificent clothes and especially of speckled designs is to be found in many a flattering description.

This early pre-Christian period establishes three important points in the background of the Irish character. The strong influence of myth and stories, the unusual place held by the mother and the conflicting easy-going yet antagonistic nature of the Gaels. (8:ch2)

The establishment of the all-powerful church plus the geographical isolation of the island serves as a springboard of Ireland into her Golden Age. She became not only the center of spiritual but intellectual life... the only light still burning in the night which had come down on the West. For two centuries Ireland, being thus privileged, was truly to be the teacher of Europe. (8:32)

It is the addition of the Church which brings up the fourth and strongest characteristics of the Irish nature. It was the deeply-ground influence of the Church which was to influence so much Irish history.

It is impossible to convey the stupidity and blundering short-sightedness which Britain tried to impose upon Ireland, beginning in the 16th Century. "With removal of the people

from their land and Church, Ireland became a class of peasant workers denied the rights of Church, self-rule, and education. The situation vacillated until in the late 1800's and early 1900's when sporadic civil rebellions became stronger and stronger until at last independence was won. (28:417-19)

The purpose of this capsule history of Eire was the attempt to understand the background of the characters of the play. Each nation is comprised of events which shape the individual and give him national character. The major elements of Irish character, superstition, religion, reverence of womanhood and antagonism offer an odd configuration. It is rather difficult to present a window which contains religion or a superstitious door, a fireplace which reverses womanhood.

The investigation of the national character carried into the field of literature, myth and art, and geography. It is impossible to list in rank order the impressions these readings have left upon the author. Research will support the influence of trends, architectural, political, religious and socio-economic, but these trends fail to provide concrete evidence to support a major decision. The investigation was not altogether fruitless. Within the creative person is a quality of intuition. This intuition coupled with knowledge serves as a basis for creativity.

The writer can only hope the setting will reflect a Dublin Tenement house in 1922 wherein lived a family of low income, torn by conflicting ideas and values.

THE LIMITATIONS OF McCONNELL AUDITORIUM

McConnell Auditorium contains a proscenium arch stage. It is housed in a square building with a raked floor and cantilever balcony. The stage house of McConnell is typical in that it contains materials for masking the setting, changing the setting, a sound system and a means of controlling the illumination on stage.

The purpose of this section is to ascertain the facilities, limitations and requirements of the stage house and auditorium. In regard to the placing of the setting on stage "It is important to know the actual shape and make-up of the performance area, for they define the space...to work." (23: 16)

In investigation of the stage house the first consideration was the over-all dimensions. The depth of the stage from proscenium opening to the back wall is 28 feet. The length from stage right wall to stage left wall is 68 feet. The proscenium opening is 37 feet wide and 26 feet high.

Next point of inquiry is the requirement of masking the setting. A partial four-legged gridiron which extends from front to rear of the stage house is 60 feet above the floor. This system is equipped with 23 sets of hemp lines, spaced on one foot intervals. A complement of this size will present little problem in masking the setting upon the stage.

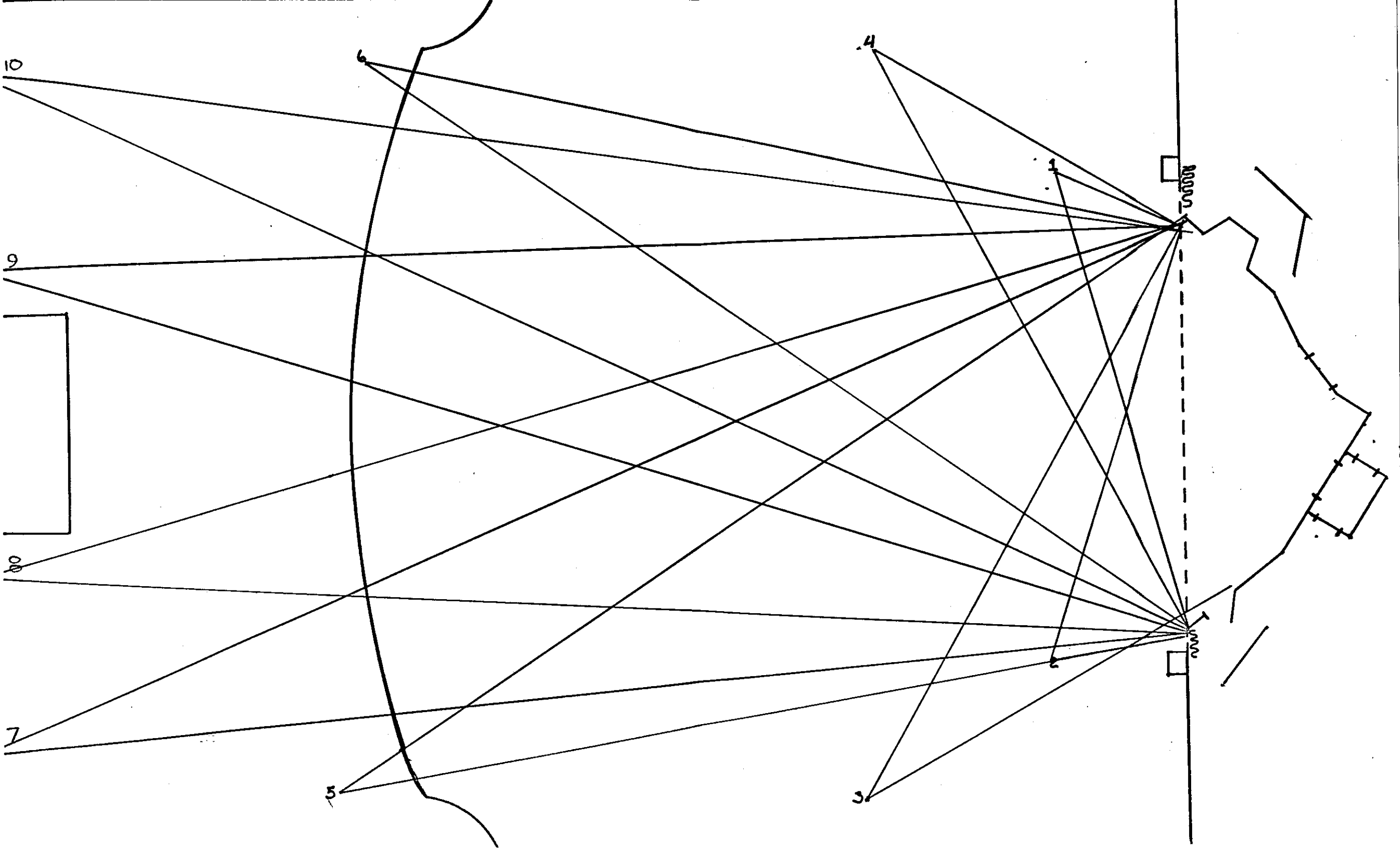
These two elements answer the question of available play-

ing space and the ability to curtain the backstage area from the audience. Ascertaining the dimensions of the auditorium increased the understanding of the stage limitations. The orchestra floor is 68 feet wide and 76 feet deep. The balcony is mentioned only as a reference to extreme sightlines.

The problems of sightlines as second to those of size and shape. "The proscenium theatre has a characteristic sightline problem that varies only slightly with the different pattern of seating arrangement." (23:18) The extreme horizontal sightlines are drawn from the points farthest to the right and left where a member of the audience can be seated. The vertical extreme sightlines are drawn from the front row upward and from the last row in the balcony downward. (23:18) See illustration 2A.

Extreme sightlines must be established to provide visibility for all the audience in areas of importance. (Doorways, areas of business, etc.)

The discovery of the size and shape of McConnell, the amount of stage available for the setting are final hurdles before presenting the design. See illustration 1C.



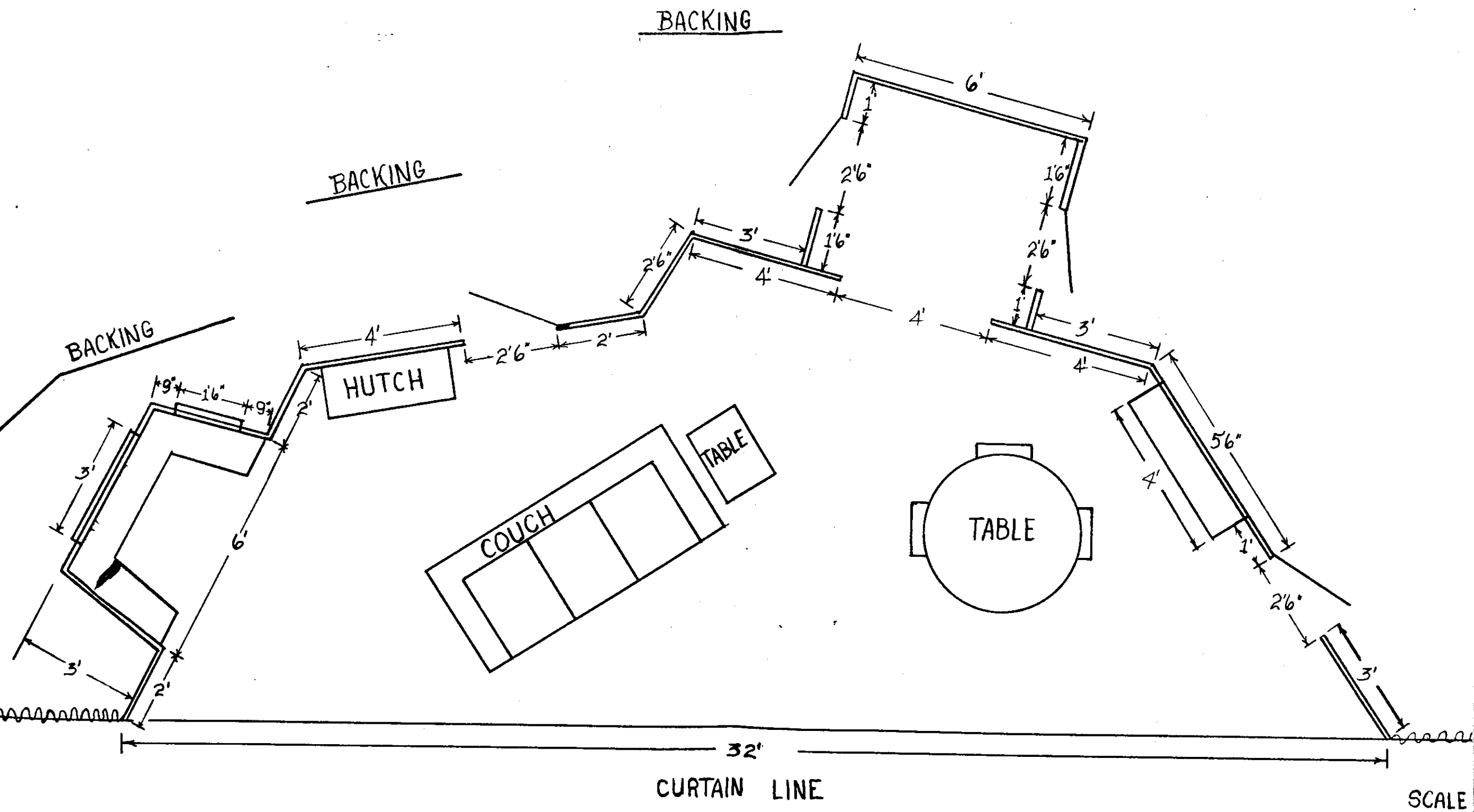
CHAPTER IV

THE DESIGNS

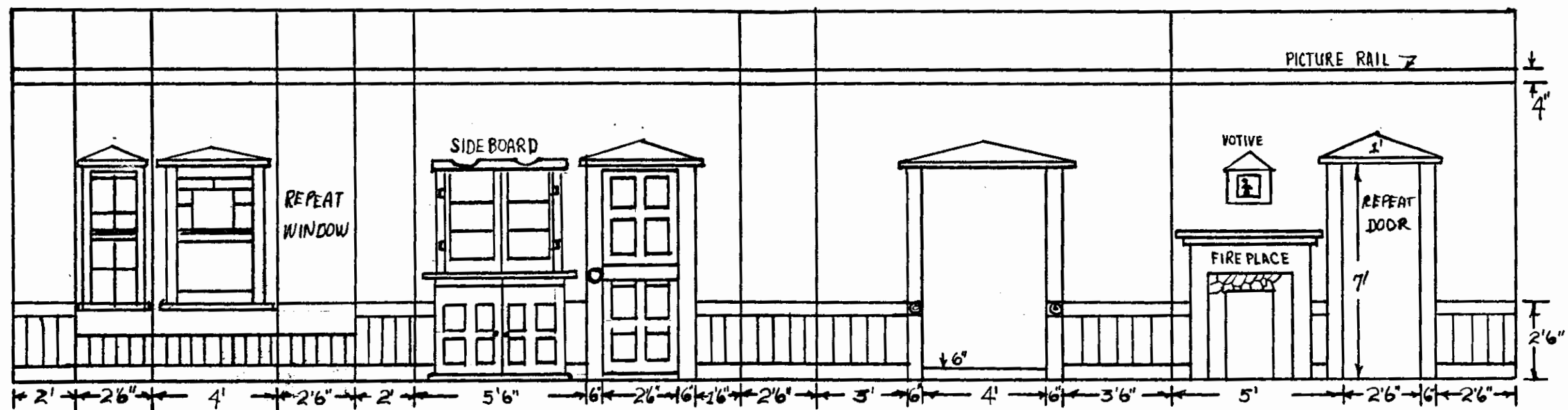
The preceeding chapters have attempted to provide a background for the needs and procedure of determining a scenic design for Juno And the Paycock. Research of the period, artistic intuition and a little bit of luck have produced these designs.

The designs will appear in this order.

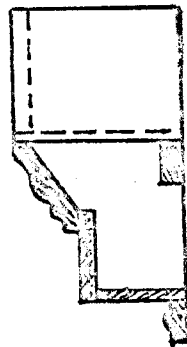
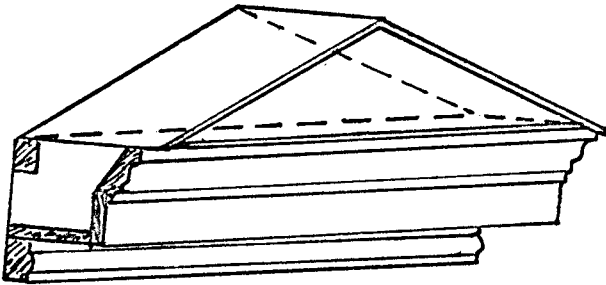
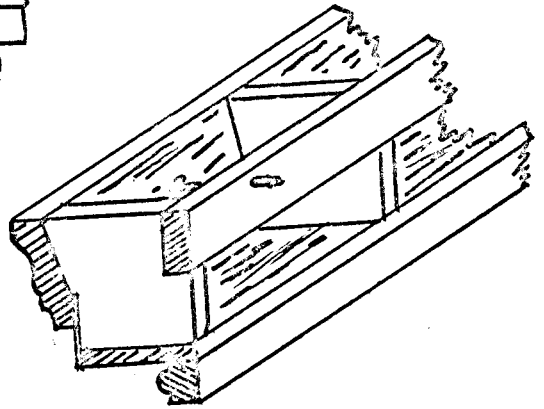
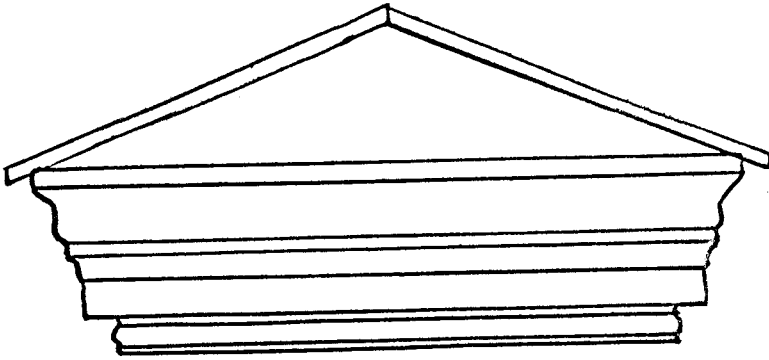
1. Floor plan
2. Front elevation
3. Details of
 - a. The cornice
 - b. The door
4. A detailed full color rendering

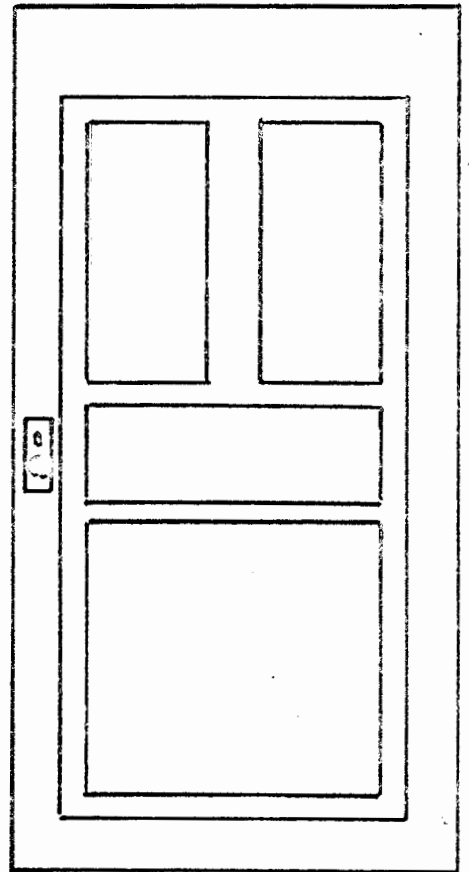
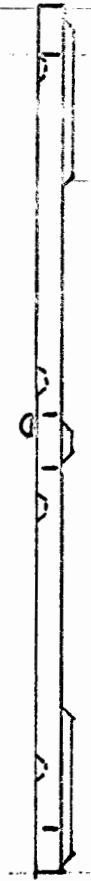
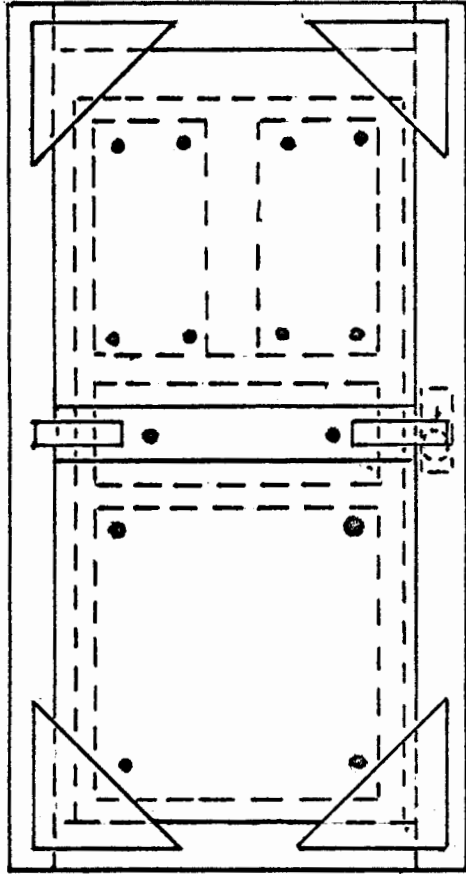


SCALE



SCALE $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'$







CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

This paper presents a set design for the play Juno And The Paycock by Sean O'Casey, as it might be presented in McConnell Auditorium of Central Washington State College. The set is designed to provide all of the necessities of acting for a proscenium arch stage. It provides space for business, traffic, and stage picture, and attempts to maintain the qualities stated within the play. The design is historically accurate in-so-much as it is practical and creatively possible.

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